

REMARKS

Applicants have carefully reviewed the office action dated October 16, 2003. With this amendment, claim 32 is amended, and claims 28, 29, 31, and 36-39 are canceled without prejudice. Claims 32-35, 40, and 41 remain pending.

Applicants respectfully thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 35, 40, and 41 are allowable. Applicants also respectfully thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 32-34, while being objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, would be allowable if re-written in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 32 has been amended to be in independent form including all of the limitations of base claim 28. Accordingly, independent claim 32 is now allowable, as indicated by the Examiner. Claims 32-34 are also allowable because they depend from allowable independent claim 32 and because they add significant elements to distinguish them further from the prior art. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request removal of the outstanding objection to claims 32-34.

Claims 28, 29, 31, and 36-39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Goto et al. in JP 2-180277. While the Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, claims 28, 29, 31, and 36-39 have been canceled without prejudice, thereby rendering this rejection moot. As such, removal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Application No. 09/991,573

Response dated January 28, 2004

Reply to Notice to Non-Compliant Amendment dated January 22, 2004

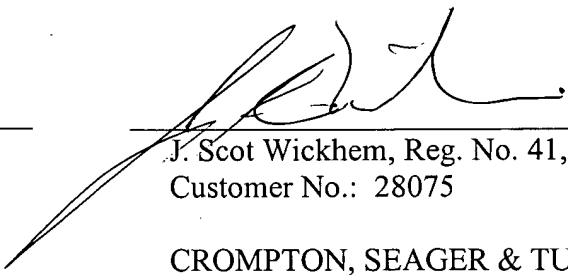
Reexamination and reconsideration are requested. It is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Issuance of a Notice of Allowance in due course is also respectfully requested. If a telephone conference might be of assistance, please contact the undersigned attorney at (612) 677-9050.

Respectfully submitted,

PAUL H. BURMEISTER et al.

By their attorney,

Date: January 28, 2004


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